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Contracts Awarded for Virginia's OneLab Network to Expand Commonwealth's Public Health COVID-19 Testing Capacity

Three laboratories will participate in a new, formalized effort to support priority public health efforts

(Richmond, Va.) — The Department of General Services and Virginia Department of Health today announced the awarding of contracts to three laboratories to participate in Virginia's new OneLab Network to expand the Commonwealth's public health COVID-19 testing capacity.

The Virginia Department of General Services (DGS) Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) established the OneLab Network to formalize a coordinated COVID-19 laboratory testing system. The network will immediately increase testing capabilities directly to support priority public health efforts such as outbreak investigations, community testing events, and testing in congregate settings, with a goal of being able to perform 7,000 per day by the end of the year.

"We have said all along that it will take everyone working together to control the spread of COVID-19, and the OneLab Network does that by bringing together Virginia's strong public health system with our clinical hospital and university lab partners to provide priority testing across the Commonwealth," said **Governor Northam**. "We have come a long way in increasing our COVID-19 testing capabilities over the past several months, and the new OneLab Network will help ensure public health has continued access to high-quality testing and prompt results."

Currently, the state is using multiple private vendors to also assist with laboratory capacity to meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

"Partnerships have been important throughout the pandemic response," added **Virginia State Health Commissioner M. Norman Oliver, M.D., M.A.** "The investments made in the OneLab Network will help us meet our immediate needs in response to COVID-19 and will also help ensure that we have testing resources and capacity to respond to future pandemics and other public health threats by establishing a structure for collaboration."

Following a competitive procurement, DGS awarded contracts to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville, and Sentara Healthcare in Norfolk.

DCLS serves as the primary, or Tier 1, laboratory in partnership with the Fairfax County Health Department Lab. The three contracted labs, or Tier 2 labs, will offer a diverse catalog of U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic tests. Each of the contracted labs will receive funding to help purchase testing instrumentation and supplies to guarantee diversity of available PCR tests, which is critical to reducing the impact of future supply chain disruption.

“Public health laboratories serve as the backbone of a national network that responds quickly to novel diseases, natural disasters, foodborne outbreaks, and other public health emergencies; however, they are not designed to provide the levels of testing needed to control the spread of a disease such as COVID-19,” said **Denise Toney, Ph.D., Director of DCLS**. “That’s what makes the OneLab Network such a unique and beneficial concept, where public health is working in collaboration with hospital and university partners to provide the level of testing needed to meet the public health challenges of today and tomorrow.”

The OneLab Network laboratories selected are positioned geographically within the state to provide rapid test results in their regions. Timely data is critical for prompt public health control measures, especially in high-risk congregate settings and communities across Virginia.

For more information on the OneLab Network or COVID-19, visit vdh.virginia.gov or dgs.virginia.gov.

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